

**AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVER COMMISSION
MINUTES OF APRIL 17, 2014
SPECIAL MEETING AT PARK HILL COMMUNITY CENTER**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alan Baker	Jim Halloran	
Barbara Sherman	Dick Sherman	Dick Sullivan
Tom Talamini	Deb Talamini	Scott Tripp

ABSENT:

Al Floyd	Albert Grant	Joanne Drapeau
Ken Francis	Sue Gaffney	Ray Jones
Lois Noble		

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 PM
2. **MINUTES** of Regular March 20, 2014 (not February 20 as listed on published Agenda): Motioned and Approved.

CHAIR INTRODUCED LAURIE WHITTEN, Town Planner, who was looking for input from the Commission members and others in attendance, in accordance with the State regulation that every 10 years Towns update their Plan of Conservation and Development. She provided handouts regarding the Workshop process for Boards and Commissions. Laurie commented that the AHRC was already very much ahead in the process just by its normal activities. When asked for an "action item list" she was given our wish list, from which the Chair read each item and members embellished on as they felt necessary:

AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVER COMMISSION WISH LIST GOING FORWARD

- To be able to travel on the Scantic River from Melrose section of East Windsor to the Connecticut River in South Windsor. *The Scantic is navigable from Melrose Bridge to Omelia Road making 6 + river miles able to be used already and work has proceeded south from there toward the Connecticut.*
- Set up emergency response areas to aid someone on the river or walking trails in East Windsor. *Placing markers every 15 paddle-minutes along the river is planned for this year; the bridges have already been numbered. These identifiers will be placed on the maps that were created by Rebecca Talamini and will be shared with Emergency Services as well as being made available to the public.*
- Create more launching and recovery sites with parking areas.
- Acquisition by Town of more available land along the Scantic River. *There are several that Laurie already is aware of that the Commission would be interested in having the Town acquire by lease, purchase or right of easement. Laurie suggested that we rank by priority the different land parcels.*
- Make the filter bed area on Mill Street in Broad Brook a real park. *It is definitely hoped that first we can find a better name/identifier for the area. It is an area that would be great for use by those who are handicapped since it is relatively level.*
- Convert Town land (formerly owned by the Hensel Family) on Route 140 into a park with trails along the Scantic River. *Again, the Town already owns those 7 Acres and with a little effort, trails could be developed.*

- Complete a walking and handicap fishing area at the Old Melrose Bridge. *A grant had been put in for the repair of this Bridge but the cost was \$85,000. Another idea was to build a bridge inside the bridge, from abutment to abutment, for fishing and walking to connect with land on the opposite side of the river which is owned either by the power company or Town/State. Another 2 plus miles of trails could be added there. The Commission is already planning on trails in the meadows. It was noted that not only do the volunteers give of their time and energy but they are using all personal equipment for the work done in the Town/State park areas. Hopefully some grant money can purchase tools that will mean that practice can stop.*
- Work with the Trolley Museum to extend its railroad tracks to the filter bed park. *More development in conjunction with Trolley Museum by extending its tracks to come to a park area and perhaps even use the holding tanks for raising of fish.*
- *Member Alan Bake added to the wish list a boat launch on the Connecticut River. That idea had been on the minds of early members of the Commission but there had been problems gaining access or permission from private owners.*

Ms. Whitten was asked how the process works and she said everything starts with the Conservation Committee. Questioned about open space money, she said open space money can only be used for open space. A member of the public in attendance asked if there was ever a possibility of a like kind exchange of river lowlands being swapped for other Town land and that idea was thought to have some merit.

Ms. Whitten commended the AHRC for its amount of work already accomplished and suggested we attend some Conservation Committee meetings. Chair thanked Ms. Whitten for her time (candy/water) and plans to stay in touch were made. He told those attending that there were flyers for the Cardboard Boat Race, our Wish List, the Annual Report, dated October, 2013, and the CT Trails Day flyer, as well as handouts that had been brought by Laurie. The regular meeting items continued.

3. **ADDED AGENDA ITEMS:** None.

4. **ON-GOING / OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. River Review – High and dark. A paddler reported that only 2 trees were down but they were passable.
- b. Water testing continues. Ms. Whitten asked about that and was told that the Chair purchased the testers that read the temperature and PH and the now-larger samples are then brought to our associate member, Dr. Kirsten Martin. Ms. Martin produces an annual report on the condition of the Scantic.
- c. Scantic River State Park Trail – Conditions are wet and muddy.
- d. Window decals – No new sales = 44 unsold.
- e. April Work Party – Members replaced the bridges that had been displaced by the rising river; however, one has moved again and more permanent solutions are needed. One bench was rescued (and coated with a preservative) but the other one is no longer visible. A carved sign denoting “Scantic River State Park” was placed on the kiosk at Melrose Bridge.
- f. Patch Blog / Facebook – Facebook has been continually updated by Member Deb Talamini.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. May work party – Members plan to schedule trail work on May 3rd, 17th and 31st all in preparation for CT Trails Day Hike scheduled for June 1st. More bridge replacement and perhaps new benches are hoped for.
- b. SRWA – May date now for the Spring Splash.
- c. Parks & Recreation collaboration – Thanks to Melissa Maltese and Member Deb Talamini our cardboard boat race flyer will be distributed through high school information that goes home to parents. Laurie Whitten was told that Melissa has worked to update our information on the Town website.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Sherman – 4/21/2014